



FLORIDA SENATE DEMOCRATS

# SESSION 2024: WE'RE BACK



## Opening Day

## *Senate Democratic Leader's State of the State Response*



Lauren Book | Senate Democratic Leader

**“THE PRIORITIES  
OF THE PEOPLE  
MUST ALWAYS BE  
THE PRIORITY.”**

*Leader Lauren Book*

The Governor's State of the State speech failed to grasp the reality Floridians are living with – and struggling with – on a daily basis: skyrocketing prices, stagnant wages, unaffordable housing and healthcare costs – the list goes on.

The Florida Legislature must put partisanship aside to stand up to the absentee Governor and start putting Floridians first — focusing on policies that give individuals and families the opportunity to be economically strong, healthy, safe, and free.

That's what Leader Book shares in rebuttal – watch her full response on any of our social media accounts.

# DEMOCRATS RESPOND

Democratic lawmakers also offered their own responses to the Governor's speech – Senator Shevrin Jones led “The People's Response” in a press conference with Senator Bobby Powell, Jr. (Let's Talk Real Talk!), Senator Lori Berman, and several House Democrats to highlight the disconnect between the Governor's message and the reality Florida's residents are living with.



**“THIS MOMENT  
CALLS FOR BRINGING  
PEOPLE TOGETHER TO  
SOLVE REAL  
PROBLEMS. NOT FOR  
DIVISIVE RHETORIC.”**

*Senator Shevrin Jones*



# FLORIDA SENATE DEMOCRATS

## 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION PRIORITIES

# Florida Dreamin':

## strong

### HOUSING

**SB 348** INSURANCE REBATE PROGRAM FOR LOW-INCOME SENIORS

**SB 1378** CONDO REFORM

**SB 64** LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

**SB 1244** KEEP FLORIDIANS HOUSED ACT

### CHILDREN & SENIORS

**SB 556** SENIOR FRAUD PROTECTION

**SB 1288** UNIVERSAL EARLY CHILD CARE PROGRAM

### ENVIRONMENT

**SB 36** WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PLAN

**SB 338** SAFE WATERWAYS ACT

## healthy

### MEDICAID EXPANSION

**SB 946** MEDICAID EXPANSION

**SB 670** COVERAGE FOR MAMMOGRAMS AND SUPPLEMENTAL BREAST CANCER SCREENINGS

### PRO-CHOICE PROTECTIONS

**SB 34** PROTECTION OF WOMEN

**SB 254** PICKETING OR PROTESTING IN OR NEAR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

**SB 256** PREGNANCY SUPPORT AND WELLNESS SERVICES

### MENTAL HEALTH

**SB 164** MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGES

## safe

### ADDRESSING COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

**SB 98** COMMUNITY VIOLENCE TASK FORCE

### GUN CONTROL

**SB 180** BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR BULLETS

**SB 176** FIREARM STORAGE

## free

### EDUCATION

**SB 1414** FREEDOM TO LEARN ACT

**SB 344** REQUIRED INSTRUCTION IN THE HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

### HEALTH

**SB 1404** HEALTH CARE FREEDOM ACT

### VOTING RIGHTS

**SB 1522** FLORIDA VOTING RIGHTS ACT

# Florida Dreamin': HIGHLIGHTS

WE'RE HIGHLIGHTING SEVERAL OF OUR SESSION PRIORITIES:

*strong*

**SB 64 LANDLORDS AND TENANTS**

**SB 1244 KEEP FLORIDIANS HOUSED ACT**

**HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT** - FLORIDA SENATE DEMOCRATS ARE FIGHTING FOR RENTER PROTECTIONS ON ALL FRONTS - FROM REQUIRING AIR CONDITIONING IN EVERY RENTAL, REQUIRING REASONABLE RENT TO HAVING A STATE DEPARTMENT FOCUSED ON THE RIGHTS AND NEEDS OF FLORIDA RENTERS AND TENANTS.

**SB 64**, FILED BY SENATOR ROSALIND OSGOOD AND **SB 1244**, SPONSORED BY SENATOR VICTOR TORRES FOCUS ON THESE RENTER FRIENDLY POLICIES.



*free*

**SB 1414 FREEDOM TO LEARN ACT**

**SB 1404 HEALTH CARE FREEDOM ACT**

**EMPOWERING FREEDOM-** FLORIDA SENATE DEMOCRATS SEEK TO REPEAL EDUCATION CONSTRAINTS SUCH AS BOOK BANS AND CURRICULUM CHANGES. THEY ALSO AIM TO RESTORE HEALTH CARE ACCESS BY REPEALING RESTRICTIONS ON ABORTION CARE, TRANS CARE, AND MANY OTHER FORMS OF HEALTH CARE.

**SB 1414**, FILED BY SENATOR TRACIE DAVIS AND **SB 1244**, FILED BY SENATOR SHEVRIN JONES



**STAY TUNED TO OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER FOR MORE HIGHLIGHTS!**

# MEDICAID EXPANSION

For years, Senator Geraldine Thompson has filed legislation to expand Medicaid in Florida. With the Senate President prioritizing access to Florida's health care system, Senator Thompson and other Democratic lawmakers got the chance to share with Republicans the benefits of closing the coverage gap for vulnerable Floridians.



## DID YOU KNOW?



- Over 600,000 Floridians do not qualify for health insurance through Medicaid or Marketplace tax credits – this includes veterans, working parents, and low-wage workers!
- 41 other states have passed Medicaid – North Carolina just did it last year!
- Studies have found that Medicaid expansion makes it easier for enrollees to look for work and less likely that they would need to borrow money or miss other payments due to medical bills.

Sources: Florida Policy Institute, Health Care for Florida



# WATCHLIST



**HERE'S A SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE BAD BILLS WE'RE WATCHING THAT TARGET FLORIDIANS' RIGHT TO LIVE A STRONG, HEALTHY, SAFE AND FREE LIFE:**

## **HB 49/SB 1596 - EMPLOYMENT AND CURFEW OF MINORS**

**THIS BILL REMOVES WORK-BASED RESTRICTIONS FOR 16 AND 17 YEAR-OLDS - UNDOING CHILD LABOR PROTECTIONS THAT COULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT CHILDREN'S HEALTH, ACADEMICS AND PROTECTIONS FROM BUSINESS EXPLOITATIONS.**

## **HB 901/SB 1120 - PRIDE FLAG BAN**



**THIS CULTURE WAR BILL IS BACK - IT TARGETS PRO-SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PRO-EQUALITY MOVEMENTS, BANNING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FROM FLYING FLAGS IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS THAT REPRESENT POLITICAL, RACIAL, AND LGBTQ VIEWPOINTS.**

## **HB 395/SB 1122 - CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS**

**UNDER THE GUISE OF "PROTECTING HISTORY", THIS BILL PROHIBITS LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FROM REMOVING MONUMENTS OR MEMORIALS, THREATENING VIOLATORS WITH FINES AND POTENTIAL REMOVAL FROM OFFICE.**



## **HB 433/SB 1492- EMPLOYMENT PROTECTIONS PREEMPTION**

**THIS LEGISLATION BANS LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FROM ESTABLISHING WORKPLACE PROTECTIONS - LIKE MINIMUM WAGE STANDARDS CATERED TO THEIR COMMUNITIES' NEEDS - AND HEAT EXPOSURE PROTECTIONS.**

## **HB 599/SB 1382 - DON'T SAY GAY 3.0**

**ONCE AGAIN, REPUBLICANS ARE TARGETING THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY - BUT INSTEAD OF PRETENDING LIKE THESE BILLS ARE TO PROTECT CHILDREN, THEY'RE SAYING THE QUIET PART OUT LOUD. THIS BILL EXPANDS DON'T SAY GAY TO GROWN ADULTS WORKING IN STATE GOVERNMENT AND POTENTIALLY PRIVATE BUSINESSES.**

**YOU MAY HAVE HEARD ABOUT BILLS TO LOWER THE AGE OF SALE FOR FIREARMS OR COMPLETELY BAN ABORTION WITH NO EXCEPTIONS. SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP HAS SAID THEY DO NOT SUPPORT THESE BILLS.**

# POLICY FOCUS

## COMMUNITY IDS

During Week 2, the Senate Judiciary Committee heard SB 1174 - Identification Documents, which bans counties from accepting ID cards that are also offered to undocumented immigrants.

Instead of offering real and direct solutions to issues affecting Floridians like skyrocketing property insurance and health care costs, Republicans are once again focused on attacking vulnerable communities that give back to the economy.



**“YOU CAN’T TAKE AWAY SOMEONE’S IDENTITY IN THIS WAY WHEN THEY’RE TRYING TO EXIST - THEY’RE HERE.”**

*Leader Lauren Book*

**“IT MAY AFFECT PEOPLE BEYOND THE IMMIGRANTS - ID’S ARE JUST A CRITICAL PART OF OUR SOCIETY AND WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THAT IN ORDER TO EVEN FUNCTION, WE HAVE TO HAVE AN IDENTIFICATION.”**

*Senator Linda Stewart*



# Pride

## At The Capitol

LGBTQ+ advocates joined lawmakers at the Capitol to speak against bills and policies that target their communities.

Bills like Don't Say Gay 3.0 ([HB 599/SB 1382](#)) and the Pride Flag Ban ([HB 901/SB 1120](#)) further target and divide Floridians based on who they are and who they love.



Senator Stewart speaking at Florida's LGBTQ+ & Ally Community Press Conference Against Discriminatory Legislation



**"BANNING BOOKS DOES NOT BAN LGBTQ YOUTH, AND IT WILL NOT ELIMINATE THEM."**

*Senator Tracie Davis*



# DEMOCRATIC BILLS ON THE MOVE

## SB 158 – Value of Motor Vehicles Exempt from Legal Process

– Senator Polsky

Increases the value of an exempt motor vehicle from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

## SB 86 – Hope Cards for Persons Issued Orders of Protection

– Leader Book

Creates the Hope Card program for orders of protection, identifying those protected by the order to better facilitate law enforcement response to violations of the order.

## SB 712 – Public Records/County Attorneys and City Attorney

– Senator Powell

Provides an exemption from public records requirements for the personal identifying and location information of current or former county attorneys.

## SB 234 – Disclosure of Grand Jury Testimony – Senator Polsky

Expands the exception for when grand jury testimony or evidence may be disclosed.

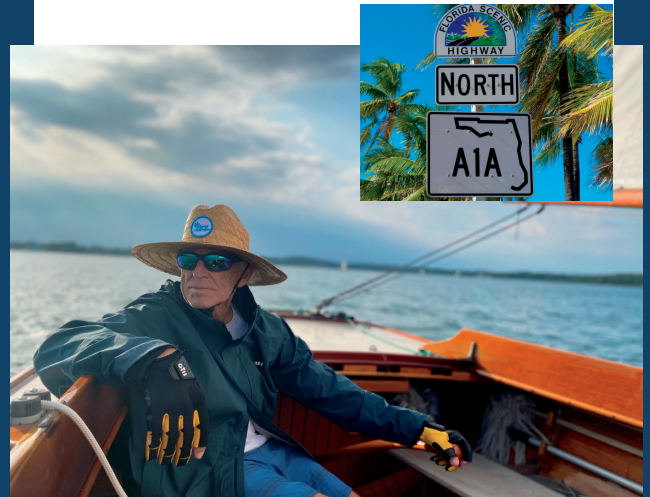
## SB 558 – Homeless Service Professionals – Senator Rouson

Creates a process for former homeless individuals to become certified to provide support services for those currently experiencing homelessness.

## SB 46 – Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Program – Senator Stewart

Makes the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) tutoring program for flexible for school districts, from offering after the school day tutoring and providing stipends to tutors.

## JIMMY BUFFET HIGHWAY



STATE ROAD A1A COULD SOON BE CALLED “JIMMY BUFFET HIGHWAY”, IN HONOR OF THE LEGENDARY SINGER-SONGWRITER AND ACTIVIST WHO PASSED AWAY FROM SKIN CANCER IN 2023.

LEADER LAUREN BOOK’S BILL (SB 84) WOULD DESIGNATE THE ENTIRETY OF STATE ROAD A1A - FROM DUVAL TO MONROE COUNTY - IN HONOR OF THE LATE LEGENDARY SINGER WHO REMINDED US THAT “IT’S 5 O’CLOCK SOMEWHERE”.

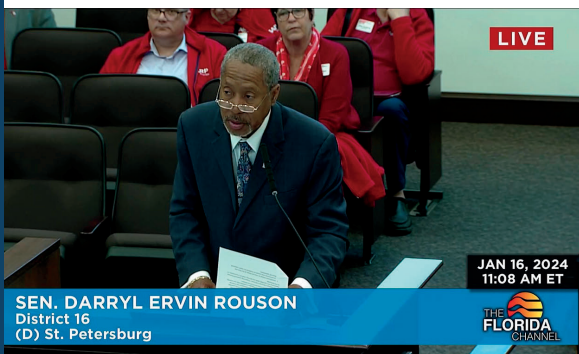
# DEMOCRATIC BILLS ON THE MOVE

## SB 556

### SENIOR FRAUD PROTECTION



THIS BILL, SPONSORED BY SENATOR ROUSON, AIMS TO SAFEGUARD INDIVIDUALS OVER 65 AND OTHER VULNERABLE ADULTS FROM FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION.



SB 298 – Saltwater Intrusion Vulnerability Assessments – Senator Polsky  
Allows the Department of Environmental Protection to provide grants to coastal counties to conduct vulnerability assessments analyzing the effects of saltwater intrusion on their water supplies and the preparedness to respond to such a threat.

SB 906 by Senator Rouson—Public Records/Appellate Court Clerks  
Creates a public record exemption for the personal identifying information of current appellate court clerks, their spouses and children.

SB 44 by Senator Stewart—Public Restroom Requirements  
Directs the Florida Building Commission to add the installation of a hook in wheelchair accessible public restroom facilities to the Florida Building Code.

SB 732 by Senator Powell—Theft from Nonprofit Organizations  
Reclassifies theft offenses from nonprofit organizations.

SB 550 by Senator Rouson—Transparency for Autism-related Services  
Requires the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to provide denied applicants the specific criteria that has not been met for eligibility.

SB 558 by Senator Rouson—Homeless Service Professionals  
Creates a process for former homeless individuals to become certified to provide support services to those currently experiencing homelessness.

SB 106 by Senator Jones—Acceptance of Cash Payments by Businesses  
Requires certain businesses to accept payment in cash.

FLORIDA SENATE

# DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

2022 - 2024



SENATOR  
LORI BERMAN (26)  
PART OF PALM BEACH COUNTY



SENATOR  
TRACIE DAVIS (5)  
PART OF DUVAL COUNTY



SENATOR  
JASON PIZZO (37)  
PARTS OF BROWARD, MIAMI-DADE COUNTIES



MINORITY LEADER  
LAUREN BOOK (35)  
PART OF BROWARD COUNTY



SENATOR  
SHEVVIN JONES (34)  
PART OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY



SENATOR  
TINA POLSKY (30)  
PARTS OF BROWARD, PALM BEACH COUNTIES



SENATOR  
ROSALIND OSGOOD (32)  
PART OF BROWARD COUNTY



SENATOR  
BOBBY POWELL (24)  
PART OF PALM BEACH COUNTY



SENATOR  
DARRYL ROUSON (16)  
PARTS OF HILLSBOROUGH, PINELLAS COUNTIES



SENATOR  
LINDA STEWART (17)  
PART OF ORANGE COUNTY



SENATOR  
GERALDINE THOMPSON (15)  
PART OF ORANGE COUNTY



SENATOR  
VICTOR TORRES, JR. (25)  
OSCEOLA COUNTY AND PART OF ORANGE COUNTY



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